NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants (Level I)
Institution: Kansas State University

Sample Application

Program: Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants

Note: The attached sample application was awarded a grant during a previous competition. Note that resumes, letters of support, coversheets, and other pieces of the application that contain personal contact information have been removed.

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Abstract

The *Lost Kansas* project utilizes our previous experience with undergraduate primary research to create an innovative student directed digital classroom to create multi-dimensional portraits of lost Kansas communities. *Lost Kansas* will: foster a new culture of undergraduate research by creating a dynamic learning environment through digital technology; cultivate faculty dialogue about the benefits of interdisciplinary teaching through digital technology and establish engagement between the University and rural Kansans through an open source online repository for sources collected by students. This project will develop tools for preserving digital resources and using those resources for educating students and disconnected community members who will finally have access to their own stories. In short, the *Lost Kansas* project will become a prototype for an innovative new classroom/community outreach experience that can be adapted to other programs at Kansas State University and beyond.

Narrative

Enhancing the Humanities through Innovation The *Lost Kansas* digital humanities
will use NEH funds to identify the organizing threads of student research in a new
Kansas Communities class that will be used as the wireframe for a collaborative space.
To convey these concepts, we will create a protected three part dynamic web based
community that includes a workspace we have named the 'Field,' a physical e-space
repository we call the 'kitchen,' and a written narrative that reveals the history of Kansas
Communities and helps students evolve into practicing historians. Finally, this program
will foster experimentation across disciplinary boundaries and create a culture of
undergraduate training in the use of digital technology to discover and share the stories of
lost communities and people. *Lost Kansas* will disseminate the results of students'
research through open source web based publications, the Kansas State Historical
Society's Kansas Memory site, the Kansas Humanities Council and links to local
historical societies, government agencies and small town libraries.

Environmental Scan While digital archives are popping up everywhere across the
United States in libraries and research institutions, very few are directly engaged with
student learning outcomes, and none are engaged with helping rural students contribute
their skills to the preservation of small town life and memory. We did, however, find
inspiration in numerous places. The *Dramas of Haymarket*
(http://www.chicagohistory.org/dramas/) and the *Consortium for the History of
Agricultural and Rural Mississippi* (CHARM) (http://library.msstate.edu/charm/) led us
to reach out to libraries and archives across the state to ensure the broadest audience
possible. *The Great Fire and the Web of Memory* (http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/)
convinced us to include virtual tours and sound recordings as potential student projects.
Berkeley's *Free Speech* digital archive (http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/FSM/) focuses
heavily on recovery and reinforced our inclination to oral history. The Center for History
and New Media's *Lost Museum Project* (http://chnm.gmu.edu/the-lost-museum/) was
also highly instructive for the elements it includes for teaching American history through
on-line documents, background essays and video. We found that most University based
digital projects are archival scanning projects, the primary purpose being web
dissemination of materials that are underutilized. The *Lost Kansas* Project emphasizes
access too but focuses more on teaching a new generation of students the value and
pleasure of recovering materials that have never been shared and are in danger of being
lost forever: farm diaries, maps, photographs, songs and the physical traces (through born
digital photographs and video) of vanished towns that document the places and people we
have 'lost' during the twentieth century. *Lost Kansas* then takes the next step in teaching
students the craft of history by having them cast that data in narrative form for the benefit
of communities who cannot do this for themselves. By working from primary materials
through finished interpretation, the project will help students learn important critical
thinking, writing and editing skills in a cooperative and collaborative environment. This
approach is unconventional in history teaching.[1] We believe that collaborative learning to
engage in "commons-based peer production" has positive potential beyond the history

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[1] Roy Rosenzweig, "Can History be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past*" Journal of
American History* (June 2006), 118.

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classroom and is better suited to information gathering as it is done today and will be in the future. We hope to capitalize on our students' familiarity with e-space technology to create a permanent record of rural life in Kansas.

History and Duration of the Project   Enthusiasm for using web-based technology in the humanities at KSU has been growing over a period of years as a result of innovative specialists and the University's financial support of IT resources. In September 2008, Kansas State was ranked No. 2 on PC Magazine and Princeton Review's list of the nation's most tech saavy campuses. In 2007, Hale staff approached History to do a pilot project to demonstrate the utility of digital technology, including e-classrooms, wikis, and Geographic Information Systems for teaching skills such as research, writing, editing and collaborative learning. Meanwhile, the history department was deeply engaged in reaching out to off-campus populations, particularly rural populations whose physical presence and memory are in danger of disappearing. From 2005-2008 a rotating community of undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty member reconstructed the history of Broughton Kansas. A former resident of Broughton and K-State alum, Mark Chapman, underwrote that project and was so moved by students' engagement with Broughton's former residents that he underwrote the development of the *Chapman Center for Rural Studies* at KSU. Mr. Chapman has provided for three years of funding with the majority of the funds dedicated to building a specialized classroom laboratory suitable for 15-20 students to work collaboratively on a specific topic in the history of rural Kansas. In addition to classroom space, the Center will contain a new research room with meeting space, reference library and carrels for four Chapman Fellows each year.[2] The Center Director and Laboratory Director's offices are located adjacent to the classroom and research room. This new space is slated for completion by September 2009. The Center has a board of directors made up of K-State faculty and community members and a development initiative has already been launched for the long term support of the Center with several potential funding sources already identified. An NEH Digital Humanities start up grant will provide professional planning for the Center to reach its full potential as an innovative model for the use of digital technology in the humanities.

Work Plan Academic Year 2008-2009   Participants in the *Lost Kansas* Project will be drawn from the History department at KSU, the IT staff at Hale Library and the digital librarians at the Kansas State Historical Society. IT staff on campus and at the Kansas State Historical society will lead faculty training in wikis, blogging and learning management systems, including K-State's in-house developed Axio. The project will also require in-house training in the use of open source software and expand our knowledge of collaborative tools. A consultant led workshop will assist us in the design of the interface and digital storage and website development. Faculty will need to be trained in the procedures by which students conduct interviews, gain permissions and give attribution in electronic form.   A second consultant led workshop and public keynote speech by

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[2] The Chapman Fellows will be selected from an undergraduate pool of students currently studying Kansas History and provides them with a $7000.00 stipend per semester. Additionally, history will provide funding for Graduate students in Kansas history through Research Assistantships, the Mueller Scholarship and four new pending Chapman scholarships of $100,000 each.

Mills Kelly will lead the development of an e-space classroom for collaborative learning with an emphasis on learning modules and commons-based peer production. We have a commitment from the Center for History and New Media's to help develop free access to primary sources, build high quality online teaching modules for using digital resources for teaching and learning in the 21st Century.

Following the workshops in the fall, faculty and IT staff will follow through on the advice and help of the consultants and create a preliminary outline of the themes and student learning outcomes of the pilot communities class, make an inventory and budget for purchasing hardware and software and negotiate agreements (MOAs) for open source access with the University Archives, the Kansas State Historical Society, smaller community based groups and individuals. The IT staff will also work with the Chapman Center faculty to provide e-space on campus for the online archive and to write protocols for the e-classroom. At the end of spring semester 2010, the original consultants will conduct video conferences with grant personnel to point out areas that need to be explored or refined and to help build an application for a Level II grant.

Staff The Project Director Bonnie Lynn-Sherow PhD, is an agricultural and environmental historian and Director of the *Chapman Center for Rural Studies* at K-State. Professor Lynn-Sherow will oversee the project for its duration including attending and organizing the workshops and writing the Level II grant. M.J. Morgan, PhD is the *Chapman Center's* laboratory Director and will be responsible for the planning, design and implementation of the pilot class with the help of our consultants. Information systems specialist Jane Schillie will work with M.J. Morgan to create a user-friendly protocol for collecting and cataloguing student research. Karin Westman PhD, is Head of the Department of English and will advise on the interdisciplinary potential for using digital technology in other Humanities departments. Rebecca Gould PhD is Director of *K-State's Information Technology Assistance Center* and will organize the in-house faculty training prior to the consultant led workshops and provide technical support throughout the project. Lynn Carlin, vice provost for *Information and Technology Services* will execute open source agreements and direct IT support to the *Lost Kansas* Project. Patricia Michaelis PhD is Director of the Library and Archives Division of the Kansas State Historical Society and will design and coordinate the linkages between KSHS's *Kansas Memory* Project and the *Chapman Center for Rural Studies* Digital Archive. Matt Veatch will facilitate the dissemination of information to smaller libraries and historical societies throughout the state.

Final Product and Dissemination The methodological goals of the *Lost Kansas* project are inextricably linked to important pedagogical goals. KSU is fortunate to have an exceptional technology team to facilitate faculty training in programs like Omeka. To make full use of our capabilities on campus, employing best practices for the long term preservation of archival materials, the Center for Library Research will help program participants plan and prototype digital tools for preserving, analyzing and providing digital resources to a core team for dissemination to the broader campus and beyond. The Center for History and New Media will provide guidance in the development of a model course to consider the educational potential for indisciplinary teaching and learning and how these tools can most effectively be used in a Level 2 application.